THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) Information can not be divulged in the interest of National Security.

Morale of defence force personnel

3901. DR.K.MALAISAMY:

SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

what is the stage and standard of morale among defence force personnel;

whether it is static/on the increase or on the decline;

if it is on the declining trend, what are the measures taken or being taken to arrest such decline and to boost the morale;

whether it is a fact that the defence services are not that much attractive and the trend is to give up defence service and go elsewhere for better prospects; and

whether it is also a fact that the response from South India for the recruitment of Defence personnel is very minimal and if so, whether the causes for such poor response and reaction have been analysed and corrective measures taken?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (e) The morale of defence force personnel continues to remain high and it is the constant endeavour to ensure that morale of the personnel is maintained at the highest level.

Due to changes in the socio-economic environment employment opportunities available in other sectors, youth look for various options of employment apart defence forces.

There is adequate response for selection of officers in Defence Forces from all States including those from the southern States. However, many candidates fail to qualify at the Service Selection Board stage. There is no shortage in Personnel Below Officers Rank (PBORs) in the three Services. The response from all States/Union Territories including those of South India is adequate.

Several steps have been taken by the three Services to attract more talented youth to join the Defence Forces. All officers including those in Short Service Commission (SSC) have been made eligible to hold substantive rank of Captain, Major and Lieutenant Colonel and equivalent after 2,6 and 13 years fo reckonable service respectively. The tenure of the SSC officers has been extended to 14 years in the three Services.

The Armed Forces have undertaken sustained Image Projection and publicity campaigns to create awareness among the youth on the advantages of taking up a challenging and satisfying career. Candidate friendly recruitment procedures to attract more number of candidates and a focused publicity drive in various institutions to attract potential candidates have been undertaken. Awareness campaigns, participation in career fairs and exhibitions, advertisements in print and electronic media, counselling and motivational talks in schools, colleges and NCC camps are also some of the other measures in this direction. In addition, the commitment and bravery of the Armed Forces is consistently projected through the electronic and print media.